

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 156253

EXDIS, CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PPDC, NI, US

SUBJECT: LETTER TO OBASANJO FROM PRESIDENT CARTER
REF: STATE 150263
1. PLEASE DELIVER TO GENERAL OBASANJO TEXT OF LETTER FROM
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PRESIDENT CARTER BELOW. SIGNED ORIGINAL BEING POUCHED.

2. DEAR GENERAL OBASANJO:

I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY YOUR LETTER OF
JUNE I TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH YOU ON RECENT EVENTS IN
ZAIRE AND THE INITIATIVES WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS SUP-

PORTED TO DEAL WITH BOTH THE IMMEDIATE AND LONGER-TERM PROBLEMS OF THAT TROUBLED NATION. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU MY THOUGHTS ON THE BROADER PROBLEM OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCE IN AFRICA. THE FRANKNESS OF YOUR LETTER WAS MOST WELCOME AND I WILL REPLY IN THE SAME SPIRIT.

FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO REASSURE YOU ON THE NATURE AND INTENT OF OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SHABA OPERATION AND IN FUTURE EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE STABILITY OF ZAIRE.

OUR INITIAL DECISION TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE AIR RESCUE MISSION AT KOLWEZI WAS BASED ON HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS PROVED THIS CONCERN TO BE TRAGICALLY

WARRANTED. THIS SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED AT THE EXPRESS REQUEST OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE.

THE SITUATION NOW EXISTING IN SHABA COULD TRIGGER ECONOMIC COLLAPSE, REGIONAL FRAGMENTATION AND WIDESPREAD SUFFERING THROUGHOUT ZAIRE. IF THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF SHABA IS TO BE RESTORED AND A FURTHER BREAKDOWN IN ORDER AVOIDED, THERE MUST BE A MORE EFFECTIVE MILITARY PRESENCE THERE THAN THE ZAIRIAN ARMY IS ABLE TO PROVIDE. IT IS CLEARLY UNDESIRABLE THAT FRENCH AND BELGIAN FORCES REMAIN THERE INDEFINITELY. SOME AFRICAN STATES HAVE OFFERED TO TAKE THEIR PLACE. AT THE REQUEST OF ALL
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INVOLVED, WE FACILITATED THIS EXCHANGE OF UNITS BY PROVIDING A LIMITED US AIRLIFT.

IN VIEW OF THE URGENCY OF ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC AND SECURITY PROBLEMS, WE ATTENDED A MEETING IN PARIS ON JUNE 5 TO DISCUSS THEM WITH THE FRENCH AND OTHER CONCERNED EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. I ASSURE YOU THAT OUR FOCUS IS STRICTLY ON THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SHABA. I HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED SUPPORTING OR PARTICIPATING IN A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE AND I WOULD LOOK ON ANY MOVES TO RE-COLONIZE AFRICA AS BOTH FOOLISH AND DANGEROUS.

WE ATTENDED THE JUNE 13-14 MEETING IN BRUSSELS TO CONSIDER, WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE, LONGER RANGE PLANS FOR INTERNAL REFORM AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO IMAGINE ANY BENEFIT THAT MIGHT FOLLOW TO ZAIRE OR TO AFRICA FROM A REPTITION OF THE INTERNAL CHAOS WHICH PLAGUED ZAIRE IN THE EARLY AND MID-1960S AND WITH WHICH YOU ARE SO PERSONALLY FAMILIAR. WE SHARE HOWEVER WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT CONCERNS ABOUT THE PRACTICES AND POLICIES OF THE ZAIRE GOVERNMENT. OUR PURPOSE IS NOT SIMPLY TO SUPPORT THE STATUS QUO. FUNDAMENTAL

REFORM MUST BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF ANY LASTING SOLUTION TO ZAIRE'S DIFFICULTIES, AND WE INTEND TO LINK FIRMLY TO REFORMS THE ASSISTANCE WE MAY BE ABLE TO LEND.

THERE IS PRESSING NEED FOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA AND FOR A NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT BETWEEN THEM THAT EACH WILL RESPECT THEIR COMMON BORDER AND WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE OTHER'S INTERNAL UNREST. THE UNITED STATES STRONGLY SUPPORTED YOUR EFFORTS TO MEDIATE SUCH AN AGREEMENT AFTER THE FIRST INVASION OF SHABA. WE QUIETLY ENCOURAGED THE JANUARY ANGOLA-ZAIRE TALKS IN BRAZZAVILLE. SOME PROGRESS WAS MADE AND I BELIEVE A RESUMPTION OF MEDIATION EFFORTS WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE AT THIS TIME. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ON HOW
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THE TWO PARTIES MIGHT BEST BE BROUGHT TOGETHER FOR SUBSTANTIVE NEGOTIATIONS.

AS WE HAVE DISCUSSED BEFORE, THE UNITED STATES FULLY SUPPORTS AFRICA'S DESIRE TO BE FREE FROM OUTSIDE INFLUENCE AND IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORT AFRICAN STATES WORKING THROUGH THE OAU IN SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO MAJOR ISSUES. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ZAIRE HAVE NOT ALTERED THIS COMMITMENT.

WE CANNOT, HOWEVER, IGNORE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA. THOUGH THESE ACTIVITIES MAY SOMETIMES COINCIDE WITH THE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF AFRICANS, THEY ARE, IN OUR VIEW, DIRECTED PRIMARILY TOWARD ENHANCEMENT OF MOSCOW'S AND HAVANA'S OWN SPECIAL INTERESTS. THEY SEEM TO PREFER MILITARY SOLUTIONS, WHICH PIT AFRICAN AGAINST AFRICAN, TAKE HUMAN LIVES AND PROLONG SUFFERING, RATHER THAN PEACEFUL SETTLEMENTS WHICH CAN BRING LASTING STABILITY.

SOVIET OVERARMING OF SOMALIA DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONFLICT IN THE OGADEN. THIS, I HAVE HAD TO CONCLUDE, WAS THE CASE ALSO IN SHABA. WE ARE PERSUADED BY THE EVIDENCE THAT CUBAN PERSONNEL WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE KATAGANS IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS PRECEDING THE ATTACK ON KOLWEZI.

SOVIET AND CUBAN AGGRAVATION OF LOCAL DISPUTES SHOULD BE OF REAL CONCERN TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND TO ALL AFRICAN NATIONS, SINCE IT INTERJECTS AN UNNECESSARY AND DANGEROUS EAST-WEST COMPETITIVE ELEMENT INTO THE CONTINENT. OUR REACTION TO THE SHABA PROBLEM WAS NOT,
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HOWEVER, ONE OF REFLEXIVE ANTI-COMMUNISM OR COLD WAR POLITICS. IT WAS BASED ON HUMANITARIAN CONCERN AND RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTEGRITY OF A LEGITIMATE AFRICAN GOVERNMENT.

THE EFFORTS OF THE OAU TO DEAL WITH THE SHABA CONFLICT, AS WELL AS THOSE IN ERITREA, THE OGADEN, CHAD AND THE SPANISH SAHARA, HAVE THUS FAR BEEN OF LITTLE AVAIL, DESPITE CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS BY MANY AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS. LEFT TO FESTER THEY ARE AN OPEN INVITATION TO OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT. I HOPE THE KHARTOUM MEETING WILL PRODUCE EFFECTIVE AFRICAN SOLUTIONS AND I WOULD WELCOME YOUR ADVICE AND VIEWS ON HOW THE SERIOUS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT AFRICA CAN BE SOLVED WITHIN THE OAU AND AFRICAN COMMUNITY.

RECENT EVENTS IN ZAIRE HAVE IN NO WAY DIMINISHED OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMON EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE IN THE COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. THESE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN AND REMAIN THE PARAMOUNT CONCERN OF US POLICY IN AFRICA. HERE AGAIN, HOWEVER, I WOULD POINT OUT THAT DESPITE DIRECT REQUESTS, THE SOVIET UNION HAS NEVER SUPPORTED OUR EFFORTS TO FIND NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS FOR ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA.

AMBASSADOR LOW AND JOHN GRAHAM ARE CURRENTLY IN RHODESIA, SEEKING TO CONVINCE THE SALISBURY GROUP THAT THE INTERESTS OF THEIR PEOPLE ARE BEST SERVED BY ENTERING INTO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. AMBASSADOR LOW AND MR. GRAHAM WILL ALSO TRAVEL TO OTHER SOUTHERN AFRICAN CAPITALS FOR DISCUSSION WITH FRONT LINE AND PATRIOTIC FRONT OFFICIALS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE INHERENT WEAKNESSES OF THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT WILL BECOME EVEN MORE APPARENT IN THE COMING WEEKS AND THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SO-CALLED INTERIM GOVERNMENT WILL RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH

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OUR PROPOSAL FOR AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING, WHICH YOU AND I DISCUSSED IN LAGOS.

I HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE RECENT LUANDA MEETING OF FRONT LINE LEADERS AND SWAPO. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE CONTACT GROUP TO RESUME SHORTLY ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH SWAPO AND OTHER INTERESTED

PARTIES. SOUTH AFRICA'S UNJUSTIFIED AND UNFORTUNATE MAY 4 ATTACK ON CASSINGA HAS CAUSED A SERIOUS INTERRUPTION TO THE FIVE'S EFFORTS, BUT WE HOPE THAT WE CAN SOON SOLVE THE REMAINING PROBLEMS AND REACH OUR OBJECTIVE OF CONCLUDING AN AGREEMENT ON NAMIBIA.

IN MY SPEECH AT THE US NAVAL ACADEMY LAST WEEK, I PUBLICLY RECONFIRMED THE BASIC COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO AFFIRMATIVE POLICIES IN AFRICA THAT RECOGNIZE AFRICAN REALITIES AND ASPIRATIONS. I CALLED ON ALL POWERS TO JOIN IN EMPHASIZING WORKS OF PEACE RATHER THAN WEAPONS OF WAR IN THEIR ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA. YOUR COUNSEL CONTINUES TO BE OF IMMENSE VALUE IN THE PURSUIT OF THIS COMMITMENT. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU FURTHER. SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER. VANCE

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